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VOL. 12 NO. 9
MAY 1982
ISSUE NO. 245

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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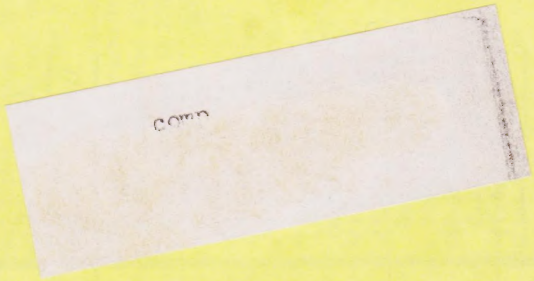

FIRST CLASS

Ted and Sylvia Blishak, owners of Accent on Travel, are frequent RTN contributors.
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ON THE COVER

This photo montage suggests how the San Diego train station might look with Bullet Trains operating out of it. In the photo, a Bullet Train has just pulled in from Los Angeles and pauses before the next run. Station photo by Peter Bretz.

(Rear cover:) "Will he get it off the ground?" might be the caption of this photo of Amtrak Vice President Clark Tyler struggling with an Amtrak helium balloon at the recent Family Days in San Francisco. Coverage of the event appears in this issue. RTN photo.

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Rail Travel News, Vol. 12, No. 9. May, 1982. Whole number 245.
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LETTERS

On Aug 4, 1981 my wife had reservations for herself and her mother on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5 Lincoln to Ogden.

Knowing that Santa Fe Hi-level cars are far superior to Superliner coaches in every way--better restrooms, better stairways, better seats, better leg rests (Santa Fe leg rests actually support legs!) and an adequate recline in each seat instead of Superliner's almost nonexistent recline--I told my wife repeatedly to be sure to ride in the dormitory chair car for the most comfort.

On the platform at Lincoln the conductor told my wife to go to a certain car; she asked him for permission to ride the dormitory-chair car. Permission granted. She was surprised that she and her mother were the only occupants of the car. Later, an attendant came from the dorm and told her that they couldn't ride in the car. She told him that she had the conductor's permission to do so. And she stayed.

Later, after breakfast, two attendants came into the car and one of them told her, "You can't ride in hyere, this is for the crew, we comes in hyere and unwinds." She told him she had permission to ride in the car. The two attendants became noisy. They used the women's restroom defiantly and messily, instead of using the men's or the restroom in the dorm. No other passengers occupied the fine ex-Santa Fe dormitory-coach to Ogden in spite of the fact that it was Aug 4, which should have been a day of excessive requests for space.

My wife told me of these incidents when she returned from her trip. I was appalled by her report. I was even more appalled after reporting this to a big Amtrak official in Topeka who told me that the 36 seats in the dorm-coach are not to be ridden in EXCEPT IN CASE OF AN OVERFLOW! Well, I say OVERFLOW BE DAMNED. This has got to be one of the most insane ripoffs in Amtrak's 10-year history. It is totally inexcusable. I know of no precedent for such a policy. I wonder what distorted sense of reasoning prompted such an extremely wasteful policy...

If the 36-seat dorm-coach handled shorts to a packed load all the way Chicago-Oakland, surely $8,000 in ticket sales could be generated on a one-way trip, even if some of the continually-changing were on the family plan. As far as shorts are concerned, they should not be handled in this car, since it is the best car on the train... let the shorts ride in a Superliner car.

Furthermore, it is absolutely criminal that a fine Santa Fe Hi-level car was butchered for the purpose of putting 24 dorm beds in it--and now not nearly 24 attendants use those dorm bunks because of drastic cuts in cooks and waiters. How terribly wasteful that a car worth hundreds of thousands of dollars runs up and down the track at peak season, completely devoid of passengers, while the reservations clerks probably denied a hundred people passage on No. 5 in just one day because of "no space available."

James A. McClellan
Wichita, Kansas

(COMMENTS ON RTN:)

Please extend subscription for three more years. RTN is a great little magazine just the way it is! "Mixed Train" is a wealth of useful or interesting tidbits."
Reader, Allentown, Pennsylvania

"A great little magazine. You sure do cram a lot of info into the space you have."
Reader, Humboldt, Saskatchewan

"RTN content has always been good, but for the last year your reproduction has been vastly improved over previous years. Pictures are good."
Reader, Goldendale, Washington

"Inclusion of your series "The Panic Box", utilizing information from internal Amtrak organs, forces me not to renew my subscription. This type of journalism is sensationalism at best, and is of no business to anybody outside this company. It

saddens me to see this good publication stooping to such cheap tactics."
Amtrak employee, Washington DC.

"Thank you for providing a retired senior citizen rate. That is very important to many of us. I am consistently satisfied with RTN, and have no major suggestions to make. A minor one, however, is that the "Panic Box" section sometimes seems excessive--lengthy and repetitive. Perhaps selected highlights would suffice. But some of your readers may dote on these details, so who am I to interfere with their pleasures? There's still plenty left in the magazine to keep my happy and informed."
Reader, San Francisco, California

"I really like the relatively new feature "The Panic Box"--very informative and thorough! I would think it a bit more interesting to use the format of "Derailments and Other Accidents" thruout the entire feature--i.e., using train name rather than train number. I realize you are pressed for space, but I for one am not familiar with all the train numbers as much as with the names. Would be well worth the added space needed. Print as many articles on the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR as you can!"
Reader, Concord, California

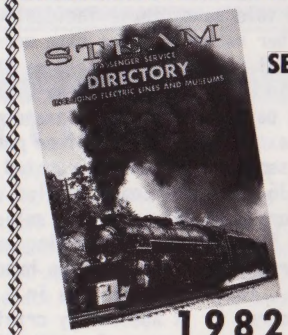
"The magazine is marvelous. The "Panic Box" is a source for detour fans."
Reader, Durham, North Carolina

★ AMTRAK MAY NOT GET FULL FY 83 FUNDING

The long, drawn-out budget battle continues on Capitol Hill. One of the real difficulties in following the budget fight this year as regards transportation is that it has often been difficult to ascertain just how big a budget for Amtrak is contained in each of the competing versions of the Federal budget.

The National Association of Railroad Passengers' latest report is that in the House the moderates' resolution may have the full authorized amount of $788 million or close to that amount for Amtrak. However, it has been difficult for NARP to learn what is the exact Amtrak figure in that budget resolution. However, NARP says that it is more likely that in the House the Republican substitute budget will be adopted. That measure allows only $758 million for Amtrak, $30 million short of Amtrak's authorized amount of last year.

The House is the key to Amtrak's funding at a good level for FY 83, because the Senate version has only $735 million for Amtrak. In the later joint House-Senate compromise conference, the compromise will be between $735 and $758 million, both lower than the amount Amtrak needs. Even at the $788 million figure, NARP reports, there is room for only half of the capital funding that Amtrak needs.



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THOUGHTS ON RIDING THE NEW ORLEANS TROLLEY

by Zane Katsikis

Car 965 of the New Orleans Public Service Inc.'s St. Charles Avenue streetcar line, the last segment of a once-mighty street railway system in the Creole City, was rumbling down Carrollton Avenue towards me. Two blocks from its origin at Carrollton and Claiborne and 6 1/2 miles from its endpoint at bustling, booming Canal Street, in the heart of the Central Business District of New Orleans, this oncoming chocolate brown vehicle with a bright green roof seemed an apparition from the past; a seeming anachronism, that has won the hearts of nostalgists as well as those of modern-day transit users.

As I waited to board 965 at Spruce Street, I was not thinking of the romance of the car nor of the boom on Canal and Poydras Streets which when the current construction phase ends in time for the World's Fair of 1984 will result in nine new skyscrapers and 10,000 more hotel rooms being added to the skyline--all served by the car line and within 15 minutes' walking distance of each other and the World's Fair site. No, as mundane as it may sound, I was thinking of the difficulties our regional transportation network was going to face during the Fair. How was it going to handle 30,000 people coming to the City thru the airport daily? How was it going to deal with a Superbowl-sized crowd, not for one day, but for six months?

Car 965 easily rolled over the switches and crossovers of the approach trackage that feeds the line from the barn at Willow Street and rolled to a quiet stop past the Camellia Grill at Carrollton and St. Charles, exchanged passengers and slowly negotiated the Mississippi Riverbend turn across the foot of Carrollton Avenue and on to the median, or "neutral ground" as it is locallled called, of St. Charles Avenue to wind its way thru the heart of the Uptown, classically developed and architecturally interesting neighborhood of New Orleans.

I barely noticed the stop at the Tulane University shelter across from the Audubon park as I lost myself in thought of a day in the near future, perhaps mid-1984, when the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal would really be an intermodal facility, handling its current tenant Greyhound, newcomer Trailways, local and regional buses using the recently-built approach ramps over the UPT to the new Mississippi River Bridge and a slew of Amtrak commuter, local and long-haul trains. My imaginary train board showed six trains per day connecting New Orleans with Baton Rouge, six more to the Airport over the same Louisiana and Arkansas lines of the Kansas City Southern Railroad. Of course, all freight movements over the segment of the line from Orleans Junction East would have been shifted over to the parallel Illinois Central line, freeing up the L&A for the passenger movements from the Moisant Airport into Downtown.

Also on my board were the four round-trips per day from Mobile over the L&N and the two from Slidell over the Southern, the former providing the first regular service over the Gulf Coast since before Amtrak. This service would also act to boost development of East New Orleans section of the Crescent City. This area, called by some "The Future of New Orleans", would then have fast, convenient access to downtown to supplement the currently-congested I-10 freeway, which is now the only real access road to the naturally penned-in Easterners, other than swamp boats or local bus service. Supplement this with two morning trains from Slidell, that would make a stop in the East, and prospective Easterners would really have access to the Central Business District. With all the above new commuter service, the UPT area would be thrust into the limelight of development, making it more than the far-off corner of the booming downtown.

Car 965 slipped gingerly onto the Napoleon Avenue median, where this seemingly Parisian grand avenue crosses St. Charles, the spires of St. Stephen's Church two blocks down Napoleon clearly visible above the solid front of grand oaks and elms that line that avenue from the river to its end. We had quite a crowd on board then: school children going home, students from the twin Universities of Tulane and Loyola, workers bound for their jobs and tourists from regions of America to which streetcars and real neighborhods are as alien as the dialect of the English language heard in New Orleans. Most passengers were bound for Canal Street, the adjacent French Quarter, or to make connections with the myriad of bus lines that connect with the Car line at Canal.

A transfer is five cents above the 40¢ cost and allows the intrepid, observant city resident or visitor to transfer up to three times, as long as the user reads the fine print, observes time limitations and does not attempt to use the originating line twice. This is a real urban transportation bargain: one that has resulted in about 40% of riders daily making transfers to connecting lines.

I wasn't really thinking of the transfer, even tho the previous evening I had used the first ticket to take the Napoleon Avenue bus to Tipitina's Club for dinner and then the

remainder to take the Tchoupitoulas bus down to Canal, on the street that bears the tongue-twisting name, along the docks, paralleling St. Charles Avenue and the tracks of the Public Belt Dock Railway--all for 45¢. No, I was once again thinking of my mythical timetable and how the local, commuter and Mobile trains would feed the longer-distance trains, which in our 1984 timetable would cover a network which would do even Professor Ronald Sheck's generous route structure justice: The mornign CRESCENT would have connections from Baton Rouge and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The talk on the platform as number 20 left is of the coming experimental section of the CRESCENT over its original route on the Gulf to Mobile and then joining at Birmingham, connecting Mobile, Montgomery and Birmingham by rail, for the first time in the Amtrak era.

The rumor among the mechanical boys is that the rail planners in Baton Rouge are contemplating doing away with the direct Southern line to Birmingham and using the heavily-populated Gulf Coast line to build up patronage on the Southern end of the line.

A daily SUNSET LIMITED would have connections to its westbound run from both the aforementioned points and Slidell, as would the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS. The CRESCENT would continue beyond New Orleans on an overnight run to Houston, thus providing two daily trains between New Orleans and Houston, and a direct Atlanta-Houston service. And about 8:30pm, the eastbound Mobile section of the SUNSET would be awaiting passengers from the recently-initiated Dallas-New Orleans run (via Shreveport and Alexandria LA on the Missouri Pacific lines, then thru Baton Rouge to New Orleans on the Kansas City Southern).

The long-distance Dallas train would be, on its final leg, one of the six commuter trains, and the Mobile-bound SUNSET along with the Gulf CRESCENT section would be two of the four Mobile trains, with a third being a thru Jacksonville service.

While I was lost in my reverie, car 965 had traversed the 20 blocks between Napoleon and Jackson Avenues and was exchanging passengers at Jackson and St. Charles. Car 965 had traversed the Garden District, as the area between Louisiana and Jackson is called, rather quickly, because a supervisor had stopped an outbound car at Louisiana and had switched it over to the inbound track directly behind us, and thus our 965 did not have to stop to accept passengers for the 10-block Garden District.

Jackson and St. Charles is the first major downtown street crossing, even tho it is 21 blocks from Canal. The St. Charles Hotel (2203 St. Charles) is on one corner. A charming little property, it hosted the October 1980 NARP regional meeting and will host the October 1982 Board of Directors meeting (Oct 1-3). The Carol Condominium building, partly shaded by towering elms, and the home of the renowned Versailles Restaurant, is diagonally across the street, and one short block away is the world-famous Pontchartrain Hotel.

The traffic light showed green, and car 965 darted across Jackson and headed towards Lee Circle. The stops were more frequent now, as this area is extremely built up, with numerous apartment buildings and retail shops providing customers for the car line. I worked my way thru the crowd towards the rear door as our car rounded Lee Circle preparing to drop off passengers at Howard Avenue. General Lee scarcely noticed as car 965 made the right turn onto Carondelet Street to begin its 12-block run in the street to Canal and its terminus.

I was going to walk the four short blocks to the UPT from the end of the car line. As I walked I could not help but think that this missing link in the St. Charles car line from Carondelet and Howard to the front door of the UPT would be so easy to put in the median of Howard Avenue. Thomas Gray, Retired Director of the FRA Inspection Track in Pueblo CO (Mr. Gray opened that facility), told LARP that that section of double-track streetcar line with catenary could be laid for less than $1 million!

I spotted the facade of the UPT behind the double row of wisteria across Loyola Avenue and asked myself how realistic were my reveries of the last hour. Could the UPT fulfill the dreams of its planners and the late Mayor Chep Morrisson, who back in the 1940s saw it as the catalyst for development in the central business district of New Orleans? Is all the development I envisioned for the 1980s possible?

I believe that all the proposed new services can be initiated if the leaders that be have the will to do it, primarily because the costs could be kept to a minimum. No new capital investments are needed to connect any of the proposed lines to the UPT.

The most sore spot was the deplorable shape of the L&N line along the Mississippi Gulf Coast to Mobile and Jacksonville. But, as I write this, crews are working to put the finishing touches on that line to put it in such good shape that some critics are beginning to compare it to the Southern Railway lines: welded rail, new crossing signals and a parent Family Lines that is not opposed to passenger trains.

In addition, area leaders are concerned about the massive influx of visitors to the 1984 World's Fair forecast for the summer of 1984, and the machinery is slowly turning to establish rail passenger service: The Louisiana Dept. of Transportation and Development and Amtrak are conducting engineering studies on the Baton Rouge Corridor;

(continued on page 18)

THE PANIC BOX

The following is a summary of major unusual occurrences on the Amtrak system between March 1 and March 15. Data of March 9 are missing.

(Number in parentheses after train no. is date train left city of origin.)

DATE TRAIN DETAILS

3-1 TWILIGHT LTD, #355 at Battle Creek MI: psgr detrained, was acting abnormally on platform and fell in front of GTW freight train, was fatally injured.

3-2 NIGHT OWL #67 minor derailment at Penn Station, one truck of food service car, delayed 69 mins; train 66 delayed 39 mins. Cause: broken switch point.

3-2 ADIRONDACK: 5:50pm, freight derail't on Napierville RR north of LaColle, Que. Single track main blocked. #69 terminated at LaColle, psgrs bused to Montreal 165-min delay. #68 of 3-3 will originate at Rouses Point, with bus from Mont.

3-2 EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS #74(2) hit county snow plow at Palmyra NY; driver hospitalized. Train delayed 91", went on to Albany & terminated there.

3-2 SF ZEPHYR, #5(2) had frozen valve on car 32018 between Ottumwa & Creston & train went into emergency & all wheels on car 32028 were found sliding and flattened severely; car removed at Creston; delay about 2 hrs.

3-2 SILVER METEOR #88(1) had liquor cabinet of lounge 3112 vandalized between Florence and Richmond; estimated damage $200; three passengers suspected.

3-2 DESERT WIND #36(1) passenger arrested at Salt Lake for theft of articles from baggage stored in the racks of a coach.

3-2 SILVER METEOR #87(2): four intoxicated passengers removed at Alexandria VA.

3-3 EMPIRE BUILDER #8(2) held at Glasgow MT 116mins for BN freight derail't there.

3-3 BROADWAY LTD: #40(3) detoured Crestline-Cleveland-Alliance-Pittsburgh due to Conrail freight derail't between Canton & Crestline OH. #41(3) detoured Pittsburgh-Alliance-Cleveland-Chicago, missing all stops between Pittsburgh & Chicago. The 6 missed stops were handled by a Greyhound bus; however, the bus was held by city police at Crestline from 4:45am-8am due to severe ice and snow highway conditions, and arrived Chicago at 5:30pm, a delay of almost 8 hours to the psgrs. Because of the late bus, two taxies were sent from Ft. Wayne to Waterloo IN with 8 psgrs to the detouring train, and psgrs at Lima were put on regularly scheduled buses to Chicago. #40 lost 75mins on detour, #41 lost 96mins.

3-4 EMPIRE BUILDER #8(3) was delayed by 2 BN freight derailments: 346mins at Glasgow MT and 195" at Tioga ND. A bus operated as on on-time train 8 Minneapolis-Milwaukee, where equipment from #331(5) operated as an on-time #8 Milwaukee-Chicago.

3-4 SAN JOAQUIN #711, with engine 289 & 2 cars, hit auto at private crossing east of Allensworth CA, killing driver. Train delayed 55mins.

3-4 EAGLE #21(4) delayed 156mins when its engine, #263, failed just after leaving St. Louis.

3-4 West Palm Beach School Patrol special operated W. Palm Beach to Washington.

3-5 SUNSET LTD #1(3) hit truck & trailer carrying a new car in City of Industry CA with no injuries and minor damage to engine 701; delayed 30mins.

3-5 MINUTE MAN #168(5) delayed 8mins at Baltimore after bomb threat called in to the Fort Washington Reservation Center.

3-6 SUNSET LTD #2(5) delayed 400mins by SP freight derail't 89 miles east of Tucson. Thru coach & slpr to Chicago will not connect at San Antonio, and affected psgrs will be bused to Dallas to connect.

3-6 CAPITOL LTD #441(6) delayed 342mins by Chessie derail't at Brook PA, between Cumberland MD & Connellsville PA. Track open 2:45am 3-7. 92 psgrs given free dinner at Holiday Inn at Cumberland. Train ran thru to Chicago as a separate train with lounge as food car, and thus #440(7) will have no food

service car; emergency food supply will be panic-boxed Pittsburgh-Washington.

3-6 EMPIRE BUILDER #8(5) delayed 22mins at Shelby MT by BN frt derail't there.

3-6 SUNSET LTD #1(5) delayed 75mins Houston-San Antonio, broken rail at Luling TX.

3-6 CARDINAL: CTC failure Clifton Forge-Hinton WV, delays: 51(5) 96", 50(5) 106".

3-6 ILLINOIS ZEPHYR #347 delayed 73" when vandals threw debris on track at Princeton IL & train line broke on 2nd car, 21167. Car was removed.

3-6 LAKE SHORE: #49(6) delayed 73" Utica-Syracuse by broken switch.

3-6 COAST STARLIGHT #14(6) delayed 64" running westbound main after eastbound blocked by small SP derail't at Elmira CA at 10:05pm.

3-7 See SUNSET item of 3-6: #22 was held at San Antonio, delayed 338mins.

3-7 EMPIRE BUILDER #8(5) delayed 2hrs at Philbrook MN, broken rail. Train 165" late at Red Wing MN, so extra section ran Milw-Chicago with 200 psrs.

3-7 CARDINAL: Chessie freight with 190 coal cars was outlawed at Clifton Forge VA (crew went off duty), on double-track main. Chessie then crossed over another freight with 190 coal cars which stalled on the crossing due to engine failure. By the time a relief engine arrived, that crew was outlawed. New crews had to be called before either train could be moved. Delays: #51(7) 80mins, #50(7) 100mins.

3-7 West Palm Beach Safety Patrol special train ran Washington-Miami.

3-8 COAST STARLIGHT derailed 47 miles south of Klamath Falls (see RTN 240).

3-8 Chicago Symphony extra ran Chicago-Milwaukee-Chicago.

3-10 BLUE WATER LTD #364 terminated at Durand and psgrs bused due to GTW derail't.

3-10 KANSAS CITY MULE #341 hit rockslide 46mis west of St. Louis, delayed 135" removing cars with flat spots and repairing engine 313.

3-10 SILVER METEOR #88(10) detoured on C&O Doswell-Orange and on Southern to Alexandria, missing no stops, when high-voltage power line fell across RF&P tracks, knocking out all signals Alexandria-Richmond. Delay: 2hrs.

3-10 LAKE SHORE: #48(10) delayed 38" at South Bend due to switch failure, & 26" at Elkhart due to air hose problem. #49(10) delayed 85" at Amsterdam setting out car 4009 with a hot journal.

3-10 COAST STARLIGHT #14(9): lounge 33000 broken into during night and case of beer and case of sausage stolen. Replacements obtained at Eugene.

3-10 Transbay Bus Terminal, San Francisco, with Amtrak ticket office, had bomb threat telephoned to S.F. police. Evacuated, no bomb was found.

3-11 MONTREALER: B&M frt derail't 16mis south of Brattleboro VT blocked single track. #61(11) detoured on CV Brattleboro-Palmer and then CR to Springfield missing Northampton which was handled by a taxi. #60(11) backed from Greenfield to Springfield, then used same detour. 5-6hrs delay for each.

3-11 LAKE SHORE #48(11) hit pickup truck at Painsville OH, delayed 47"; then derailed lead truck of first engine (352) 5 miles further, at Perry. Delayed 253" more.

3-12 SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA #18(11) derailed 6mis north of San Luis Obispo (see RTN 241).

3-11 EMPIRE BUILDER #7(10) delayed 1 hr removing cars 39909 and 1159 at Whitefish MT due to hot wheels caused by rubbing suspension bar.

3-12 SF ZEPHYR #5(11) delayed 67" when wind blew a van off a UP freight at Sherman WY, blocking both tracks.

3-12 MONTREALER #61(12) ran without head-end power St. Albans-Putney VT because no buses available after HEP went out on engine 308. Engine 213 added at Putney. Delay: 193mins.

3-12 MERCHANTS LTD #176 hit trespasser on track 7 miles east of Providence RI.

3-12 BROADWAY LTD #40(12) delayed 93" by Conrail signal failure at Colson Interchange. #41(12) delayed 29mins.

3-12 SILVER METEOR: SCL freight, in emergency stop to avoid pickup truck on track, derailed 6 engines and 19 cars at Orange Heights FL, between Ocala & Waldo. #98(13) to combine with #88(13) at Auburndale and operate on #88's route to Jacksonville, missing Wildwood, Ocala & Waldo (69 psgrs bused). #97(12) to

run combined with #87(12) to Auburndale, missing Waldo, Ocala & Wildwood (52 psgrs bused).

3-12 LAKE CITIES #352: psgr ran thru gate as train departed Chicago & hung on rear car (the way they do in comic strips). Train stopped to board psgr, but after leaving it was found that conductor was still in depot. Train backed in to pick up conductor. Delay: 18 mins.

3-12 A temporary ban on sale of Amtrak hot dogs was put into effect after a boy became ill after eating one on the SAN DIEGAN. When it was discovered that he'd bought the hot dog 3 days earlier, the ban was lifted.

3-13 THE CONGRESSIONAL #181, with 400 psgrs, had locked brakes on 1st car (21101). Couldn't transfer psgrs, as #141 had 100 standees and #169 full. Extra train sent from New York to handle psgrs. Delay: 2hrs, 54mins.

3-14 Portal Drawbridge, 6mis west of New York, out of service 9:11am-10:38am, not able to lock closed. Six Amtrak & 2 Conrail local trains affected.

3-14 SUNSET LTD#2(14) delayed 90mins detouring on UP between City of Industry and Pomona CA after SP freight derail't there.

3-14 SILVER METEOR #87(13) delayed 83" at Yemassee SC behind disabled SCL freight.

3-14 EMPIRE BUILDER #8(13) delayed 95" White Fish-Havre MT with engine troubles with unit 364 and with BN unit 6460 that was substituted.

3-14 The Arrow computer indicated 28 high school students would board the CARDINAL #50 at Cincinnati, but the number turned out to be 78. Amtrak arranged for train 51 to bring more food and drop it off at Charlottesville for #50.

3-14 West Palm Beach Safety Patrol special ran Washington-West Palm Beach.

3-15 SAN DIEGAN #580 was hit in the side of car 21255 by a 1977 Toyota pickup truck at Santa Ana CA, delayed 15"; no injuries.

RAIL CANADA

MORE CANADIANS TRAVELED by train in 1981 than in any previous period of VIA Rail Canada's 5-year existence, VIA announced this month. In its annual report, just out, VIA said that over 8 million people used the train in 1981, compared with 7.6 million in 1980--a 5.5% increase in ridership. Passenger revenues rose to $160.8 million from $136.7 million. Revenue increases were attributed to both higher fares and higher ridership.

A FARE INCREASE of 10% will take effect June 18, VIA announced on May 18. Accommodation charges also will rise. VIA said the increases reflect inflation.

THE CANADIAN MAY return to a 3-night schedule next fall, according to a VIA supervisor in the West. The current schedule is deemed too slow, and long waits for time at obscure locations often aggravate freezing up in the winter. There is concern, RTN has learned, at how the CANADIAN can operate at 20 cars this summer, since most servicing facilities and platforms can barely handle the 12-15 cars used now. And unless two diners are operated, there is no way that everyone can be fed.

SASKATOON-EDMONTON TRAIN is not doing well, averaging about 10-15 passengers; but the Winnipeg-Saskatoon train is reportedly often sold out (altho VIA assigns only one 40-seat coach-cafe on weekdays), with standees at times. The Calgary-Edmonton railiners which connect with the CANADIAN are doing well also, and a do-it-yourself baggage car has been added. These trains now require seat reservations.

VIA RAIL SCHEDULE for June 1 is rumored to include a slowdown of Edmonton-Calgary trains by CPR, due to a variety of reasons offered. (This was the fastest run in the British Commonwealth in the late 1950's!) Buses may be substituted for some trains during summer peak periods "due to trackwork."

CP RAIL IS REPORTED by a reliable source to have asked $15 million for upgrading the 2.2-mile line between South Edmonton and the CNR City Yard downtown to allow restoration of passenger service between Calgary and downtown Edmonton.

The CPR says this would force relocation of their intermodal yard, as well as track work, etc. Valuable downtown property would remain in CPR hands, however, and with the yard gone it would be suitable for redevelopment.

CP RAIL ANNOUNCED May 14 that it will lengthen its summer shutdown of its heavy repair facilities to 8 weeks, instead of 4, because of declining rail traffic.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA commute trains are getting an experimental Caltrans paint job. One set of 3 cars and a locomotive were painted in time for the Amtrak Family Days display start-May 14. Top of equipment is platinum mist, lower is dark blue, and loco nose is red. Two colors are separated by a rainbow stripe of deep red and two shades of blue-green. Lettering, in a type style resembling stencilling, is black.....

MASS TRANSIT FUNDING will be adversely affected by the lack of a gasoline tax in the next fiscal year. DOT Secretary Drew Lewis had been pushing heavily for such a tax to help fund his department. The House's budget measure had included $3.7 billion for transit, contingent upon the gasoline tax. But on May 19 President Reagan announced that he had decided not to push for the gasoline tax increase --a big blow to Lewis, according to NARP. NARP is still urging rail supporters to write their legislators urging at least $3.7 billion for mass transit. The Administration wants only $2.6 billion, and that amount is in a Senate bill. In addition, the Administration wants to be more restrictive with transit, reducing the Federal share of transit capital funding from 80% to 75%, prohibiting new rail system startups, and eliminating operating subsidies by 1985.....

LOS ANGELES COUNTY Transportation Commission decided May 12 to control the development of the proposed Long Beach-L.A. light rail line, rather than forming a joint-powers authority that would consist of itself, Caltrans and the Southern California Rapid Transit District. The County fears control by Caltrans and wants to maintain its own say in the project.

LOS ANGELES SALES TAX of an extra half-cent per dollar, okayed by county voters in 1980 for mass transit use, has been upheld by state courts, opening the door to increased funding for transit-starved Southern California.

THE BUDD COMPANY in the last week of May was moving to get an injunction in Federal courts against New York's MTA awarding a $662 million contract for new subway cars to Bombardier Inc. of Montreal. Budd claims the contract is illegal and would seriously hurt the car-building industry in the U.S.

PRESIDENT REAGAN'S DECISION of May 19 not to seek a 5¢-per-gallon increase in the federal gasoline tax was "a dark day for the users of mass transit", said American Public Transit Association executive VP Jack Gilstrap. $1.1 billion for bus and rail transit would have been generated in a year by the tax, as well as $4.4 billion for repair of highways and bridges.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA IS starting to roll with transit plans, now that its tax funding has been legally freed up. Orange County on May 7 unveiled a $1 billion plan for a rail transit system roughly between Buena Park and Irvine.

★ NARP REACHES ITS FIFTEENTH BIRTHDAY ★

President Reagan needn't sell the concept of "voluntarism" to the National Association of Railroad Passengers. For 15 years, this non-partisan, non-profit citizens group has been relying primarily upon volunteers to achieve a balanced transportation system in the U.S., one which requires modern rail--as well as air and highway--transportation.

A classic example of a grass-roots organization, NARP has a paid staff of 3, and over 11,000 "volunteers"--dues-paying citizens from every walk of life who believe rail transportation is important to America's future and deserves a fair shake from the government. Even NARP's officers and directors serve without any compensation, other than the satisfaction that their voluntary efforts are contributing to the national interest. The Association's accomplishments over the years have all been achieved with the generous and enthusiastic effort of the teachers, attorneys, students, retirees, doctors, farmers, clergy, authors, laborers, military personnel, and others, who comprise NARP's membership.

When Chicago attorney Anthony Haswell founded NARP on May 18, 1967, America's passenger train network, a once-great national resource, was rapidly nearing extinction--the victim of government-subsidized air and road competitors. Railroad stations were plastered with train discontinuance notices, and public timetables were cluttered with footnotes warning of pending discontinuance applications. Those trains which had survived into 1967 were often chronically late, with belligerent crews and filthy, decrepit rollingstock. Many thought Haswell's effort was well-intended, but too late.

But Haswell was not too late, and his fledgling group quickly gained members and momentum and went on to play a critical role in rescuing the core of the nation's passenger train network. Together with rail labor, environmental groups, and municipal officials, NARP convinced Congress of the need for government action to save the trains. Congress responded in 1970 by establishing Amtrak, which began operating on May 1, 1971.

Despite having old, unreliable equipment, Amtrak immediately reversed the 25-year decline in U.S. train ridership. With the growth of the rail advocacy movement and with help from two energy crises, Congress gradually provided Amtrak with desperately-needed capital funds to revitalize the shabby system it inherited from the private railroads. Due to almost constant White House obstructionism, however, progress was slow. It took Amtrak over ten years to retire its stock of obsolete rollingstock (the last train to run with such equipment was the Florida-to-New York SILVER STAR of March 9, 1982).

Amtrak today possesses a fleet of new or like-new cars and locomotives, schedule reliability is good, and ridership is strong, with Amtrak handling 18.2% more passenger-miles in Fiscal Year 1981 than in FY '78. This was possible because of a steady growth in demand for long-distance travel, which balanced out a sharp, temporary decline in Northeast Corridor travel caused primarily by a major railroad reconstruction project there.

Since the creation of Amtrak, NARP has worked hard to preserve and improve U.S. train service. NARP's successful campaigns include:

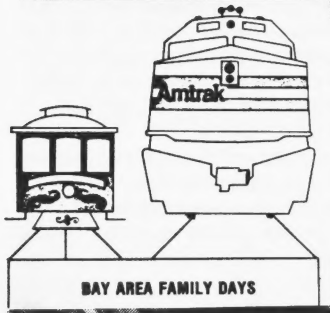
*A 1973 fight against Amtrak's attempt to discontinue two major routes.

*A 1974 campaign to replace Amtrak's president, who was widely regarded as ineffective.

*Helping to generate big turnouts at ICC public hearings in 1978 to oppose a Carter administration plan to cut Amtrak service drastically. The hearings led ICC's Rail Services Planning Office to oppose the administration's plan, citing "broad public support and a demonstrated need for the continuation of rail passenger service."

(continued on page 18)

FAMILY DAYS COME TO SAN FRANCISCO



Over 33,000 visitors admired the Amtrak equipment on display at another Family Days event, this time in San Francisco from noon on May 14 thru Sunday the 16th.

It was a festive occasion, and the cause of rail travel was aided by bright, warm sun which beamed down after a number of cool and foggy days. Amtrak engineer's caps and brightly colored helium balloons abounded, and a large Amtrak tethered balloon, carried around in a baggage car (see photo) floated on the breeze high above the crowd.

A continuous line of visitors paraded thru the display cars, and got a first look at Amfleet II lounge car 28006, the first Amfleet II car to be sent to the West Coast. The other cars open for examination were Hi-level coach-dorm transition car 39908, and Superliners 34041 coach, 38023 diner, 33011 Sightseer lounge, and 32045 sleeper. Exhibit (baggage) cars 10090 and 10091 held displays of historical passenger train artifacts and Amtrak history, including a slide show. Car 10092 carried the balloon. F-40 engine 245 (the same engine pictured here last issue in another role) was open for fans to walk thru the cab. The diner featured sample Amtrak meals laid out on the tables, and the sleeper had beds made up to demonstrate the comforts of travel by sleeping car.

Also on display was Caltrain peninsula commute train equipment: engine 3187 and bi-level cars 3702 and 3701. These were newly painted in a Caltrans-adopted color scheme of shades of red and blue (see Urban-Suburban Transit).

Western Pacific at the last minute withdrew from a planned freight car display. Colorful, striped tents housed booths by Citizens for Rail California, Peninsula Commuters Action Committee, Great Western Tours and others.

The display was near Pier 29, on San Francisco's Embarcadero, using the tracks of the Belt Railway, part of which would be used to bring peninsula commute trains up to the Ferry Building at the foot of Market Street if plans announced by Caltrans May 3 come to fruition (see last issue).

Amtrak's Clark Tyler, Art Lloyd and other officials were on hand for the event.

Family Days were to move on to San Jose for a May 23 showing.

RTN photos.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMTRAK'S ALAN BOYD will be joining Airbus Industrie when he leaves Amtrak at the end of June. Amtrak has not made a formal announcement as we go to press, but the news appeared in Business Week. Airbus is a French-West German-British consortium that manufactures aircraft (in competition with Boeing, notes Business Week). Boyd will be the company's North American representative.....

AMTRAK ANNOUNCED IN late May that it will be developing its air rights in Greenwich CT--two office buildings over Amtrak property there. This is to be the first in a "long series" of similar lease arrangements that is to bring in extra revenue to help support the passenger system.....

★ ★ ★

MARCH RIDERSHIP FIGURES for Amtrak arrived just as we are going to press; the complete figures will be published next issue. Here we note only that total system ridership was 1,595,433, or a 6.4% decrease from March 1981. Corridor, short distance and long distance patronage were all down.....

TIMETABLE ERROR DEPARTMENT: Amtrak's April 25 system timetable contains some errors, as did its predecessor. A reader points out the following:

(1) Page 11: circle reference 31 misspells "Penn Center" as "Pen Center".

(2) Page 30: the double page number (46/47) opposite Oregon is incorrect. With discontinuance of the WILLAMETTE VALLEY, no Oregon service appears on page 47.

(3) Page 33: no arrival times are shown at Harrisburg for the PENNSYLVANIAN.

(4) Pages 34 & 41: times for westbound connecting trains in the shaded areas are inconsistent. The LAKE SHORE connection's time at Detroit is the arrival time of the LAKE CITIES, whereas the EAGLE connection's time at El Paso is the departure time of the SUNSET.

(5) Page 35: trains 50 & 51, CARDINAL, should be listed as not operating daily (as is shown, for example, for the Valparaiso trains).

(6) Page 35: a stray dot appears on the map between Glenview and Fox Lake.

(7) Page 37: the positions of the northbound ILLINI (Ex. Sun.) and the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS should be reversed (so that the arrivals in Chicago are sequential).

(8) Page 38: circle reference 23, read literally, permits travel on the ILLINOIS ZEPHYR between LaGrange Road and Aurora, a doubtful possibility (because of the BN commuter service).

(9) Page 43: the westward mileage arriving at Spokane is shown as 1886, whereas the mileage departing for Seattle is shown as 1866.

★ ★ ★

SUPERLINER LOUNGES AND diners are undergoing a retrofit program, so there has been some shortage of them on the rails. The PIONEER has been operating with an Amcafe, but the regular Superliner equipment is expected to be back by June 1. At least one set of the COAST STARLIGHT's equipment has been using a Hi-level lounge in place of the Superliner Sightseer lounge.....

BANK OF TOKYO will head the group of Japanese investors who are to arrange $500 million in financing--part of the $2 billion that American High Speed Rail Corporation calculated is needed to build a Bullet Train line between Los Angeles and San Diego. (Incidentally, Alan Boyd apparently will remain as chairman of the Board of American High Speed Rail Corporation.).....

STAR LAKE RAILROAD will be the name of a new line Santa Fe intends to build in the San Juan Basin of extreme northwestern New Mexico. The line will service a coal mine it will also construct on railway property. Initial railroad construction will cost $45 million, with coal operations starting in 1984.....

THE NEW YORKER magazine of May 17 carries a 2-page "timetable" by James Munves which purports to be an MTA timetable, with such humorous reference notes as "Does not stop here during months lacking letter 'r'", and symbols indicating such features as "No air-conditioning" or "Non-illuminated".....

HEAVY AD CAMPAIGN was launched by Amtrak on May 10, with TV, newspaper ads, etc. As we walked thru the Superliner lounge car at the San Francisco Family Days in mid-month, a suave TV commercial for the Superliners was being shown on the TV at one end of the car. Travel agents said that their Amtrak business increased noticeably as the campaign began.....

COLORADO GOVERNOR DICK LAMM on May 21 rode the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR between Denver and Greeley with his daughter's fifth-grade class. He cancelled a speaking engagement to take the ride, "something more important", he said. The class came back to Denver by bus. The Governor was shown in news photos boarding the train in Denver. Three class members videotaped the whole trip.....

★ ★ ★

AMTRAK UNIONS RATIFIED the new labor contracts mentioned last issue (page 3) and Amtrak announced in a Capitol Hill press conference May 27 that 39-month contracts with the six unions were finalized which provide for average wage increases of up to 18.7% over the life of the contract. Amtrak was very pleased that this wage settlement is significantly below the national average of 30% for freight railroad unions. An Amtrak spokesman said that the settlement would come as a shock to the rest of the rail industry, and would save Amtrak $6 to $8 million per year in labor costs. The contracts also provide a "major overhaul and modernization of work rules", with about 100 rules either abolished or modified. The contracts also establish a joint labor-management council, giving labor an active role in the management and operation of the Amtrak system. The six unions involved are non-operating unions.....

★ ★ ★

NORTH COAST HIAWATHA revival rumors: Amtrak is reportedly going to take a look at the line thru Southern Montana this summer. One of their questions would be how few stations would need to be set up to resume service.....

AMTRAK BOARD MEETING of May 26: Board member Samuel E. Hellenbrand was elected Vice Chairman of the Board. An ad hoc committee was formed to search for a new President for Amtrak. The search committee consists of Mr. Hellenbrand (chairman), DOT Secretary Drew Lewis, and Crete B. Harvey. One of the important actions of the Board, as reported by NARP, was a discussion of a retirement plan for 344 conventional passenger cars that were not previously considered. The Board approved selling 85 badly deteriorated cars and keeping 71 candidates for head-end power conversion. The big discussion arose over the 188 cars that did not fall clearly into either of these categories. Amtrak management feels it is not economical to convert them, while Board member Ross Rowland argued that they should be saved. A compromise was struck by Vice Chairman Hellenbrand, who suggested that Amtrak consult with the Board before disposing of any of the 188 cars. Amtrak VP Frank Abate indicated that Amtrak generally rehabilitation economical if its cost is less than half that of buying new equipment, and if the car involved is not year 40 years old, at which age any railroad can refuse to operate it.....

MEXICAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS is considering extending a train to San Antonio TX, as reported here earlier, but there is debate in Mexico as to the soundness of this idea. Amtrak VP Frank Abate told the May 26 Board of Directors meeting that Amtrak has enough equipment to provide Mexico with cars to do the extension.....

AMTRAK'S ALAN BOYD told the Board meeting of May 26 (according to NARP) that the rail corporation is "on target" to hit the 50% cost ratio this year. For the year to date, revenues are 4% below budget projections, but costs are also 3% under budget. For the month of April, revenues are 3.7% under budget but 18.9% above the level of April 1981, said Boyd.....

THE BALTIMORE TUNNEL, cause of a number of previous NE Corridor tieups, was the source of another disruption of Corridor train traffic on May 15 when inspectors decided that the tunnel was going to cave in, as houses above it developed cracks and seemed on the verge of collapse. At 9:36am the Baltimore fire chief requested of Amtrak a hold on all tracks in the tunnel, and all service between Washington and Baltimore was suspended. At 10:46am the maintenance of way foreman reported several pieces of concrete had fallen from the tunnel wall and that there were hairline cracks in the roof. At 6pm, shoring operations got underway, with pouring of concrete. The tunnel was restored to service at 6:15am on the 16th, with a 15mph speed limit, increased to 30mph at 7:59am. Sixteen Amtrak trains were terminated at Baltimore, and 3 at Washington. Ten trains originated at Baltimore and 3 at Washington. Three trains were annulled (#472, #20 of the 14th, and #170) between Washington and more northerly points. In addition, 14 trains were manipulated by changing train numbers at either Baltimore or Washington. The SILVER METEOR, train 87 of the 15th, detoured over the Chessie from Bay to Washington. Two shuttle trains ran between Washington and BWI Airport Rail Station, MD, using equipment from train 20 of the 14th and #170 of the 15th, making 7 round trips. On-board crews from the SILVER STAR train 82 of the 14th, turned at Washington to work train 81 of the 15th. Boston service on-board service crews went thru with the passengers. Washington and New York OBS crews turned at Baltimore. The Washington commissary handled stocking of trains at Baltimore. Fifty-five buses handled about 6400 passengers between Washington, BWI and Baltimore, these passengers being delayed 30-163 minutes.....

RENO FUN TRAIN made its last run of the season the weekend of Apr 30-May 2. Photo above is of a run earlier in the season, an after-dark departure from Oakland before Daylight Saving Time. RTN photo.....

CITY OF MONTEREY, CA advertised in Northern California newspapers this month via a Public Notice which read: The Cities of Montereyand Pacific Grove and the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District are planning a public recreational corridor along the railroad right-of-way in the Cities of Monterey and Pacific Grove from the Fisherman's Wharf area westward. Parties interested in submitting proposals for a recreational transit system along the right-of-way in this major recreational and tourist area should contact: Mr. Butch Cope, Community Development Dept, City of Monterey, City, Monterey CA 93940.....

SOUR GRAPES ARTICLES about Amtrak appear so infrequently now that when one does it garners a lot of attention. A number of readers sent us copies of the article "Don't-Give-a-Damtrak" by Jonathan Yardley which appeared in the Washington Post Apr 19 and was syndicated elsewhere. Yardley writes about anumber of recent trips in the NE Corridor, and every little thing irritated him so much that one begins to wonder whether it was really the train bothering him, or something else in his life. Maybe he should move. A quote from Yardley: "...my experience is that Amtrak simply doesn't work. Period.".....

U.S. POST SERVICE issued another stamp in its transportation series, this one a 2¢ stamp with a locomotive of the 1870s, issued May 20 at Chicago. The stamp is available in coils (rolls) only.....

RESTORING OKLAHOMA'S SERVICE is the next project that NARP will push. The rail supporter organization feels that it greatly strengthens the cause of better trains if a national organization focuses upon one item at a time (as it did with the CARDINAL last fall). NARP pointed out that Oklahoma is the most populous still without rail passenger service. An Oklahoma train would benefit Texas as well. NARP says that Oklahoma is the one opportunity for the successful introduction in 1983 of a non-403-b (not state-supported) service. The organization recommends that a specific route not be named at this point in lobbying.....

RAIL PASSENGER EQUIPMENT SAFETY is the topic of Federal RR Administration hearings in several Eastern and Midwestern cities between May 24 and Jun 3. NARP said its position is that we need more trains and not more regulations.....

MIAMI-TAMPA 403-b SERVICE is expected to begin before next Thanksgiving.....

HUEY P. LONG BRIDGE at New Orleans, 47 years old, was damaged May 10 when a large tractor-trailer garbage truck broke thru the guard rail and plunged 100ft to the ground. Inspectors found two steel I-beams under the roadbed were damaged (guard rails were connected to them), and 2 heavy girders bracing the bridge's tall towers were damaged. New Orleans Public Belt RR will repair the girders while the state will replace the sub-roadway beams. Meanwhile, only light vehicles are being allowed to cross, in a single lane. Train traffic was halted for a time, but the SUNSET was allowed across on May 11 and left New Orleans without delay May 12...

★ ★ ★

AMTRAK EQUIPMENT POSSIBILITIES: One of the reasons Amtrak needs enough capital funding in its FY 83 budget is that the corporation wants to order new slumbercoaches and sit-down food cars. These would be used with the Amfleet II and Heritage cars on longer-distance trains in the East. Kevin Gregoire reports that Amtrak is now favoring straight-sided cars (instead of Amfleet-type rounded designs) for the slumbercoaches because the shape gives more room for sleeping compartments. (Amtrak re-inventing the wheel.) Amtrak was favoring the Amfleet shape for esthetic reasons (!). One reader has described the esthetics of an F40 engine and Amfleet cars as equalling the sight of a brick with a string of wieners tied to it.....

AMFLEET II CARS have a different type of brakes, a dual system that is to be retrofitted onto the Superliner cars also. Some Superliner cars are also being tested with coil springs instead of the air suspension they came with.....

SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA leg into San Francisco has been proposed by Caltrans, as reported earlier. Amtrak is reportedly cool to the idea, but suggests that if Caltrans would assume 100% of the deficits, Amtrak might go for the idea. The 100% assumption seems unlikely in view of California's fiscal problems.....

AMTRAK FARES INCREASED by 6.5% on April 25 on the average. NE Corridor fares went up only 3.5% (Washington-Boston) and 4.5% (NY-Boston), however.....

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA DEPOT is going to be renovated on the exterior. Amtrak and the RF&P have just agreed on a joint funding of the work. A proposed hotel and convention center across the tracks just south of the station might include an interior renovation for the 77-year old station as well.....

News in this issue is updated thru May 27, 1982.

WRECK OF THE OLD 97

Newly-released booklet documenting the history of this famous tragedy on the Southern Railway in 1903.

Detailed narrative with numerous photos and maps. 40 pages, soft cover. $4.95 pp.

Gregory Publications, Dept. RT
2824 Blairmont Drive, Danville, VA 24540

MOVING?

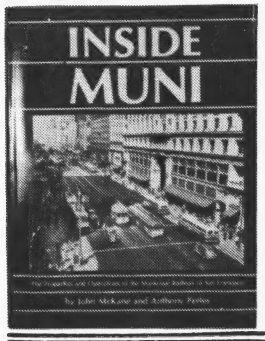
Be sure to notify RTN of your new address as soon as possible. Don't rely on the Postal Service to forward your mail!

NEW ORLEANS TROLLEY (continued from page 6)

the Louisiana and Mississippi Congressional delegations are pushing to give approval to a joint compact between the two states to bring service back to the Gulf Coast, and Alabama is taking steps to join the compact. Community leaders in Slidell LA and in Eastern New Orleans are also interested in rail passenger service. And finally, geography itself points to a railroad passenger renaissance for the "City That Care Forgot." All in all, it is an exciting time for transit and rail travel in New Orleans.

Zane Katsikis is President of the Louisiana Association of Railroad Passengers.

BOOKS



Recently we reviewed the Interurban Press book "The People's Railway" (in RTN 222). Now the companion volume has been published (May 1). "Inside Muni", by John McKane and Anthony Perles, describes and pictures the properties and operations of the San Francisco Municipal Railway. As the publishers note, San Francisco operates the most interesting public transportation system in the nation--a rail subway, cable cars, modern streetcars, and trolley and motor coaches. They're all here in this 8½x11 277-page hardback, with 445 photos. This is a book for the equipment fan, with rosters and photos of Muni equipment from the early days to the present. The price is $35.95 (plus $1.50 postage if ordered by mail) to Interurban Press, Box 6444, Glendale CA 91205.

NARP'S 15th BIRTHDAY (continued from page 11)

*Mobilizing broad opposition to Southern Railway's 1978 effort to discontinue its NYC-Washington-Atlanta-New Orleans SOUTHERN CRESCENT. NARP Director John D. Heffner, an Alexandria VA attorney, volunteered countless hours to represent NARP before the ICC, which subsequently denied the railway's discontinuance bid. The train was transferred to Amtrak several months later.

*A 1979 fight against Transportation Secretary Brock Adams' attempt to ignore 1978 ICC hearings and cut Amtrak's route structure by 43%. Aided by other consumer and environmental groups, NARP defeated most of Adams' scheme; only 15% was actually cut.

*An intense 1981 battle in which NARP played the primary role in thwarting the Reagan administration's effort to dismantle the entire Amtrak system outside the Northeast. In a year when many thought it was "all over" for Amtrak, NARP instigated a public rebellion of such magnitude that route cuts were almost entirely confined to the handful of remaining segments which were genuinely inefficient.

NARP's activities have resulted in countless newspaper articles about the association and its individual members, along with considerable radio and TV coverage. Within the past three years, NARP officials have appeared on CBS-TV's "CBS Evening News," ABC-TV(s "Good Morning America," PBS-TV's "The MacNeill-Lehrer Report," Cable Network News, and The Larry King Show.

Over the years, at the urging of NARP members, Amtrak has implemented numerous service improvements, including schedule revisions and new station stops. NARP members played a key role in the 1972 restoration of the MONTREALER; the INTER-AMERICAN (now the EAGLE) in 1974; the LAKE SHORE LIMITED in 1975; and the PIONEER in 1977, as well as several short-distance 403(b) trains.

At the present time, NARP's priorities include: restoration of Amtrak service to the state of Oklahoma, the most populous of the five states lacking passenger trains; increased capital funding for Amtrak equipment acquisitions in order to expand the system's car fleet (and revenue-earning capability); construction of cheap light rail (trolley) systems in urban areas to provide an alternative to congested roads.

In its early years, NARP was heavily subsidized by Founder Haswell's own contributions. In 1975, both the financing and the corporate organization were "democratized." Since then, most of NARP's funds have come in small amounts from individual members' dues and contributions. Most members of NARP's board of directors are elected from 12 regions of the U.S. by the NARP members living in the regions. Regional meetings for elections are held in late winter each year. Affiliated state rail passenger associations, which now number 35, hold meetings more frequently.

Anyone may join NARP by sending $15 ($7.50 if under 21 or over 65) to NARP, 417 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington DC 20003.

CARS & CONSISTS

*Special train Birmingham AL to Amory MS for Amory Railroad Festival, Apr 3: Engine 273; cars 21138, 21043, 21093, 21084, 21025.

*SILVER STAR, train 81, Orlando FL Apr 3: engines 379, 386; cars 1228, 1629, 2461 "Silver Crag", 2440 "Pacific Beach", 25000, 25003, 25006, 8507, 3118, 25030, 25031, 25029, 2462 "Silver Chasm". Same, train 81: engines 384, 389; cars 1226, 1628, 2454 "Redwood Grove", 2475 "Miami", 25008, 25011, 25014, 8520, 3117, 4726, 4737, 4001, 4646, 2893. Train 81, Sanford FL May 16: engines 377, 385; cars 1626, 2458, 2093, 25017, 25015, 4013, 8528, 3117, 25025, 25001, 25028, 2476.

*SILVER METEOR, train 88, Orlando FL Apr 3: engine 381; cars 1264, 1237, 3120, 25034, 25032, 25033, 2437 "Pacific Ocean", 2453 "Cedar Grove". Same, train 87: engine 385; cars 1365, 3114, 4015, 4721, 4647, 4740, 25019, 2436 "Pacific Crest", 2982 "Pine Rapids." Train 87, Winter Park FL May 12: engine 386; cars 1256, 25028, 3118, 25003, 25041, 25039, 2436 "Pacific Crest", 4018. Train 88, same: engine 383; cars 1272, 3112, 25027, 25042, 25043, 2462 "Silver Chasm", 4641, 4644.

*KANSAS CITY MULE, train 341, Kansas City May 15: engine 300; cars 21115, 21020, 21227, 20232, 21241, 21232, (off at Jefferson City:) 21117, 21116, 21120. Extra cars for Maifest (wine festival) at Herman MO.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"We are a transportation company built and strategically positioned for the future. We have brought the nation a world-class passenger train network. It is operating at increasingly high efficiency levels, supported by a creative marketing effort which is generating strong customer demand.

"...Our vision of being America's finest transportation company has never been clearer. Our performance justifies this aspiration for the future."

--From Amtrak's 1981 Annual Report.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"With a little imagination, your view from the Amtrak sleeping car 'Pacific View' becomes timeless. The evening lights of Richmond, Oakland, and San Jose could as well be the same ones viewed from the bedrooms of Southern Pacific's Lark in the 1940's and 50's, when it ran overnight between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

"This is how the editor of a recent article in SUNSET Magazine describes his overnighter trip from Sacramento to Los Angeles on Amtrak's new Spirit of America."

--From a letter from Sunset Magazine given to Amtrak travel agents in May.

(Which connects in L.A. with the SUNSET MAGAZINE LIMITED.)

SAN DIEGO RAIL ADVENTURES

by Jim Russell

On an evening in late April we set off from Oakland on a trip that would take us to Los Angeles, San Diego and the Mexican border--and our first chance to ride the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA overnight and our first opportunity to ride the San Diego Trolley.

"When a trip starts this badly, you know it will end well." We consoled ourselves with this thought as we finally settled down in Bedroom C of our sleeping car, "Pine Cavern." On the way to the Oakland depot, we had encountered a police roadblock that forced us to detour, and in the process we discovered that we had a flat tire--and our spare was flat also. The tire would not respond to a can of Fix-A-Flat, and there was no telephone booth on the strange street we were on. The decision was thus made: we drove to the station on the flat (about a half-mile). Arriving five minutes before departure of the SPIRIT, we entered our assigned bedroom only to find the lights out and two young gentlemen occupying the folded-down bed. Embarrassed and apologetic, these unknowledgeable rail travelers retired to the coach from which they had come, and the sleeping car attendant re-assigned us to Bedroom C.

The SPIRIT Is Willing

Our Heritage Fleet sleeper was in good condition, with everything working properly. Exactly on time, on the slightly revised Apr 25 schedule, the SPIRIT slipped off down the track for L.A. At the head of the train was F40 engine 242, followed by baggage car 1127, Heritage sleepers 2940 "Pacific View" and 2984 "Pine Cavern", Amcafe 20222, and Amcoaches 21804, 21876, 21875 and 21849. Not many people had boarded at Oakland, most of them coming from points north of there, consonant with earlier reports we'd had.

The train was pretty well populated, tho, and almost everyone aboard was in the Amcafe, we discovered as we went for some of Amtrak's good popcorn. We got our popcorn without delay, but there was no place in the Amcafe to sit, so we returned to our sleeper. Clearly, this train could use a full lounge car.

It's a marvelous convenience to have this overnight train to L.A. In the late 1960's, before the SP's LARK was discontinued, we rode this overnight route quite a bit. In RTN we've been pushing for its restoration for a decade. And now on our first long ride on it, we found it difficult to sleep. Partly it was the "first night out" effect, and partly it was the track. The track is in good condition, but not quite good enough. There is a lot of smooth track, and then suddenly you encounter a cluster of bumps that create vertical oscillations of your car.

We should have met the northbound SPIRIT in the middle of the Salinas Valley, but the meet came at about Santa Margarita, shortly before we entered the first of the tunnels north of San Luis Obispo. That would put No. 18 about an hour late. We learned later that the train had been delayed by a young woman's apparent suicide on the track near Santa Barbara.

The SPIRIT has become noted for getting to its end points about a half hour early. We reached Los Angeles at 7:52, due in at 8:30am. (Schedule padding allows the train close to an hour to travel the five miles from Glendale to L.A.)

As we left the train at L.A. we passed a gentleman from the coaches who was mumbling aloud "Never again! Next time I'll take a bus." What his problem was we didn't know. Presumably something had prevented him from sleeping.

At L.A. we met RTN's Paul Rayton and prepared to board train 574, the 9:50am SAN DIEGAN to travel to the home of the Trolley. Our 4-car train, led by engine 224, left on time with 31 passengers and a group of about 40 small children who were traveling to San Clemente. Not all the SAN DIEGANS stop at the former residence town of Richard Nixon--only two in each direction.

Paul counted 12 people on at Fullerton and 15 at Santa Ana. Nearing San Juan Capistrano, about 50 miles from L.A., the train finally comes out of the smog and industrial blight and into some scenery. As we passed San Onofre, Paul clocked our train at 90mph. San Onofre, with its nuclear power plant a stone's throw from the train windows on the ocean side, is a good place to get past quickly, tho the reactor is at the present shut down while engineers try to imagine how it could withstand an earthquake.

Where's the Red Baggage Compartment?

The conductor has a pre-written spiel to give at each stop. Just before each station we heard the announcement to "check your red baggage compartment" before leaving the train. We looked around for the nonexistent red baggage compartment. It turned out he was trying to say "overhead baggage compartment."

We arrived at San Diego at 12:24, 11 minutes early, and filed into the station and then out the front door to confront the San Diego Trolley, awaiting departure for the Border. Our trolley consisted of two red units, 1006 and 1008. We used the change machine, bought tickets, and soon were on our way.

The trolley was comfortable and quite impressive. Visibility thru the big windows all around was excellent. On this slow weekday in early afternoon, patronage was solid but not as heavy as on a weekend, so there was room to move about and to sightsee and take photographs.

The Trolley Breaks Down

All was going nicely, when at Beyer Avenue a mechanical malfunction cropped up. It was 1:30 and we were not very far from the Border. Our trolley sat immobile for nine minutes, and then moved slowly forward for one minute, only to stop again. The operator was frantically on the radio to headquarters for advice. He checked and rechecked all the gauges and operations that he was instructed to examine in search of the malfunction. Finally, it became known that the brakes were sticking on the rear car. Uncoupling the first car, he was able to make it move. But we couldn't leave the rear car behind. We learned that a second trolley had broken down behind us some distance, and that a piece of construction equipment was fouling the line somewhere. To add to the list of woes, your editor's camera had also broken down (we learned later), and none of our pictures of all this would ever see publication.

A pair of mechanics arrived, and at 2:05 the two cars recoupled and we started up again for the Border. At the Border, our train was left out of service, and a train behind us--cars 1003 and 1010--immediately upon arrival prepared to head back to San Diego. By this time a large crowd had gathered, and we and it pushed ourselves onto the San Diego-bound trolley until there was not a square foot of standing room left. With the delay, we had already missed our planned SAN DIEGAN to Los Angeles, had somewhat spoiled our dinner plans, and had been unable to make a planned short foray over the Border.

At San Diego our trolley, after arrival, was augmented by unit 1009 to form a 3-car train that would be the next departure for the Border. We waited until time to board SAN DIEGAN 581, at 4:20, which got us back into L.A. at 6:57 (a long and well-filled train).

★ ★ ★

The next morning saw us at the Glendale station boarding the northbound COAST STARLIGHT to travel up that beautiful coastline back to Oakland. The coastal scenery begins shortly before Santa Barbara. We were surprised to note that the Santa Barbara station itself is badly in need of painting. The mission-style station, built in 1905 as the sign on the front notes, appears to be the only tacky looking structure in the attractive Santa Barbara environment. We noted also that the Santa Barbara Biltmore Hotel, owned by train lovers, sports an ex-Amtrak, ex-Santa Fe dining car as a cafe. Santa Barbara's 200th anniversary is 1982.

The scenery, with many wild flowers, was beautiful, the train ride was flawless (except that a rock hit our window somewhere near Fremont or Hayward). Arrival at Oakland was at 8:20pm, five minutes ahead of schedule.

RAIL FANTRIPS

May 22: Harpers Ferry Special, RT from Richmond VA; Amfleet cars, sponsored by Old Dominion Chapter, NRHS. Info arrived too late for earlier publication.

Jun 19: Delmarva Limited. Cape Charles VA-Pocomoke City MD one way on part of PRR Delmarva Division. Charter bus from Baltimore or DC. Eastern Shore RR Alco, 2 coaches. $37 ($39 after 6/5). Delmarva Ltd, Box 548, Laurel MD 20707.

Jun 27: Susquehanna Transfer, Little Ferry-Butler NJ on NYS&W. 300 dome seats in ex-Auto-Train/ATSF Big Domes, 2 GP-18s. $26 by 6/14. Lv Saddle Brook NJ 9am, back 4pm. Recycling Railroads Inc., 93 Main St, Newton NJ 07860.

Jul 17 & 18: Iron Horse Festival, Logansport IN. Excursions with ex-Buffalo Creek & Gauley #13 & 5 ex-CRI&P open-window commuter cars on ex-PRR Logansport-Anoka. SASE to: Iron Horse Festival, PO Box 407, Logansport IN 46947.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to:
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

VIA RAIL CANADA, AMTRAK, EURAIL PASS, 20th CENTURY RAIL TOURS - tickets and reservations - WE KNOW HOW! One call does it all. Pay by credit card or check. Tickets mailed directly to you. Contact GREAT WESTERN TOURS, masters of rail travel, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

GOING TO EUROPE? Be sure to take the new, practical TRAIN GUIDE EUROPE. T.G.E. shows the way to what you need in 57 stations, makes travel simple on 15 national railways. Full details about trains, classes, tickets, stopovers, discounts, reservations, baggage, buses & ferries. Travel vocabularies in 11 languages. U.S. $7.90, Canada $8.90, postage incl. Order from INTERTRAIN, 72 MacDonald Street, Ottawa, Canada K2P 1H6.

WANTED: Original color slides of Amtrak trains in scenic locations. $5.00 paid for each slide retained. Unwanted slides returned. Michael Koch, 3813 Forest Grove, Annandale VA 22003.

TWO PULLMAN CLASSICS together for the first time! Open-platform business car LV 353 and 5 dbr-8 sec sleeper "Clover Colony" join for two luxury weekend private car trips, each starting and ending in New York: July 2-5, "Cardinal" to Chicago, "Broadway" returning, from $745; July 9-11, "Montrealer" to Montreal, "Cavalier" to Toronto, "Maple Leaf" returning, from $715. Includes all accommodations, plus meals and beverages prepared aboard and elegantly served en route by Pullman veterans. Space limited to 20 guests per trip. Info, reservations from D.L. Ross, 300 Winston Dr, Apt. 2020, Cliffside Park NJ 07010. (201) 886-1359.

RAILROAD UNIFORM BUTTONS. Send $2.00 for three samples and list. Joseph Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Box 3, Methuen, Mass. 01844. See us at Mile High Railfair on July 17 & 18 at Jefferson County Fairgrounds, Golden, Colorado. For more information, write NRHS, P.O. Box 5181, Denver, Colorado 80217.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads: only $1.25 per square inch. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

FEB 1982 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE/(DECREASE) OVER 1981

METROLINERS	84,526	(18.6)
NORTHEAST CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL	447,428	10.8
PHIL-NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD	16,623	(29.1)
NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA	163,770	2.3
PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG	65,537	(6.0)
NEW YORK-HARRISBURG	24,711	(1.6)
TOTAL NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	802,595	2.1
NEW YORK-NIAGARA FALLS	59,258	10.4
CHICAGO-ST.LOUIS	21,448	8.8
CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE	9,969	(50.7)
CHICAGO-DETROIT/TOLEDO	30,414	(12.1)
CHICAGO-CARBONDALE	14,217	13.4
CHICAGO-QUINCY	5,422	(15.6)
LOS ANGELES-SAN DIEGO	92,353	10.2
SEATTLE-EUGENE	3,332	(46.0)
VANCOUVER-SEATTLE		
WASHINGTON-CINCINNATI		
WASHINGTON-MARTINSBURG	19,515	(5.6)
OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD	11,695	13.3
NEW YORK-MONTREAL	4,324	(5.4)
CHICAGO-PORT HURON	7,267	(2.3)
CHICAGO-DUBUQUE		
CHICAGO-DULUTH	3,598	(11.4)
CHICAGO-VALPARAISO	22,965	34.3
CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS	3,136	(23.5)
CHICAGO-PEORIA		
CHICAGO-KANSAS CITY	5,995	(3.8)
PHILADELPHIA-PITTSBURGH	7,255	45.7
PORTLAND-EUGENE		
LOS ANGELES-SACRAMENTO	6,030	.0
TOTAL SHORT DISTANCE	328,193	(3.3)
WASHINGTON-MONTREAL	9,929	(22.1)
NEW YORK-FLORIDA	51,843	(2.5)
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/WASHINGTON	17,024	7.6
CHICAGO-CINCINNATI-WASHINGTON	4,788	(31.1)
CHICAGO-SEATTLE (N)	22,662	26.6
CHICAGO-SAN FRANCISCO	25,388	(15.4)
CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES	14,268	(22.0)
CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS	14,578	6.9
CHICAGO-TEXAS	5,033	(37.6)
LOS ANGELES-NEW ORLEANS	4,684	(21.6)
LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE	25,543	(30.1)
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON	21,229	(3.1)
BOSTON-NEWPORT NEWS	4,603	1.0
NEW YORK-SAVANNAH	10,047	22.6
SEATTLE-SALT LAKE CTY/CHI	10,330	(12.9)
NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS	16,426	18.5
LOS ANGELES/OGDEN-CHI	8,613	(14.7)
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	266,988	(7.8)
SPECIAL TRAINS	11,654	58.2

Here are the latest Amtrak ridership figures, for February, 1982. The January figures appeared last issue.

Total ridership systemwide in February was 1,409,430. This was a small decrease of .9% from February of 1981.

RTN calculates that the bulk of the ridership drop in Feb was due to the routes that were discontinued last October. These routes are identifiable in the accompanying list by the blanks in the data columns. If these routes were still operating, Amtrak would have shown an increase of about 1%, RTN estimates--not at all a bad performance in this recession year.

For the fiscal year up thru Feb, ridership was down 4.2% over the previous fiscal year, Amtrak reported--a total of 7,694,795 compared to 8,028,032 in the previous fiscal year.

There was an omission in our report last issue: we neglected to note that a very large percentage of the CARDINAL's ridership drop in January was due to the change to a tri-weekly schedule, rather than the previous daily schedule.

Northeast Corridor ridership continued strong in February.